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strike
Tucker Johnson

for percussion quartet



umbel press

2023

Tucker Johnson

strike
for Matchstick

Rezitativ und Pastorale
Prozessionen I
Pastorale und Rezitativ
Prozessionen II
Pastorale und Rezitativ
Prozessionen III
Rezitativ und Pastorale
ländlichen Funktion und Struktur

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program note

...for me, the cowbell... is the third work composed for and with percussionist John McGovern in connection with his degree recitals at the University of Maryland. This multi-percussion piece is inspired by John's research on the cowbell and his wide interest in its place and function in musical culture. It is conceived primarily as in response to a passage in composer Helmut Lachenmann's 1978 essay *Bedingungen des Materials. Stichworte zur Praxis der Theoriebildung*:

*Was hat die Kuhglocke in Stockhausens Gruppen oder im Zyklus noch mit
ihrer ländlichen Funktion zu tun, und was hat sie neben der Salompflanze
Celesta zu suchen?*

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performance note

...for me... requires sixteen cowbells or similar bell instruments and a Cow Box toy, which is turned to produce a cow-like sound. The performer is asked to organize these bells into four discreet groups of at least four bells each. Organization should be based on the performers sense, and does not require the four groups to sound identifiable, but that would be a way to organize them.

Groups I-IV will correspond to the staff numbering in the score. Notehead locations within the number staves are to be interpreted as high and lower bells within their respective group, outlining the contours to be played in each group.

▲ - a very short pause, meant to break up the continuous pulse but not to have any significant duration.

∞ - turn the Cow Box to produce a cow-like sound.

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percussion quartet

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The musical score is written for a percussion quartet (I, II, III, IV) in 3/4 time. It consists of three systems of four staves each.

System 1: Each part (I, II, III, IV) begins with a measure rest, followed by a half note (marked *pp*) and a quarter note (marked *f*). Parts III and IV then play a continuous eighth-note pattern.

System 2: All parts begin with a measure rest. Parts II, III, and IV then play a continuous eighth-note pattern.

System 3: Part I begins with a measure rest. Parts II, III, and IV play a continuous eighth-note pattern, with various rests and accents throughout.

about Tucker Johnson

Tucker Johnson is a composer, performer, and educator pursuing the Ph.D. in Music Composition at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY. His musical practice includes works for soloists, ensembles, and electronic media, including pieces designed for indoor and outdoor installation. He seeks to create highly organized systems to build connections between philosophy, design, and personal experience. Many of his works commune with music from other times and places, establishing links and references to histories of musical culture. Experiences reading, hiking, and amateur botanizing can be found intertwined in his work, alongside a passion for open-source software and teaching.

Tucker's music has been concertized and honored at festivals and events, including the Dot-The-Line new music festival (Seoul), Longy Divergent Studio (Boston), soundSCAPE Festival (Cesena), Composing in the Wilderness (Prince William Sound & NYC), Shastra Rhythm Workshop (New Jersey), and the Penn State New Music Festival (State College). In 2021, he was awarded the Marjorie Jane Brewster Memorial Music Scholarship, given to one graduating Penn State student each year to pay for graduate studies at another institution. Additional honors include the Belle S. Gitelman Prize, Peter T. Luckie Award, and Warren Benson Scholarship.

A consistent supporter of new music, Tucker has helped organize many events, festivals, and concerts and served various music organizations throughout his academic career. Currently, he serves as technical director of OSSIA New Music, a student-run organization at the Eastman School of Music committed to performing the works of contemporary composers. He has also worked with the Hochstein School, WXXI Classical, Penn State's Living Music, and the New Music Consortium. Additionally, Tucker serves as a sound engineer, technician, and teaching assistant with the Electronic Music Studios at Eastman (EMuSE) and has produced and performed dozens of electroacoustic works in this position with artists such as Alan Pierson, percussionist Dan Druckman, and soprano Jamie Jordan.

In his research, he has worked to develop approaches to music composition and collaborative improvisation using mathematics, networked computer instruments, machine listening, ambisonics, and other computer-assisted methods, with a tendency to favor recycled and reclaimed computer hardware. Listeners can hear this work in improvised performances with Belgian saxophonist Floris Van Der Veken, recordings with percussionist/guitarist John McGovern, and performances with Ossia New Music.

He holds the MA and Catherine Filene Shouse Arts Leadership Certificate from the Eastman School of Music and the BM from Penn State University. He also studied at the University of South Florida. He has studied with Robert Morris, Matthew Barber, David Liptak, Baljinder Sekhon, Sarah Genevieve Burghart Rice, and Susanna Hancock. Tucker serves as instructor of the Penn State Young Composers Institute, a virtual program for high school students running in the fall and spring.

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This score was engraved on 01-20-2024, using LilyPond version 2.24.3. If you would like to view the most recent version of the input documents that generated it, visit <https://github.com/tuckerjohnson/for-me-the-cowbell>.

